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## MONTICELLI.

Among the great painters which France has produced during the past century, there is one whose works are comparatively little known by the world in general, and yet, they are of such beauty and importance that, sooner or later, they must be given their proper places in the celebrated collections of Continental Europe.

The artist in question, Adolphe Joseph Thomas Monticelli, was a native of Marseilles; his early life was spent in a tiny village at the foot of the Maritime Alps, where wandering unrestrained among the rugged hills, the child learned to passionately adore the nature which in after years he placed upon canvas in so marvelous a manner. Almost from his infancy, the young Monticelli showed a decided tendency toward an artistic career, and, when still but a youth, entered the Ecole des Beaux Arts at Marseilles, where he soon gained the first prize for life drawing.

However, the boy's father looked upon art as a poor business at best, and arranged to place his son with an old friend, in commerce. At the end of six months this honest merchant dismissed his apprentice, sending to the father a message advising him never to trust the young man with a sou for investment, as he was utterly lacking in business ability. This trait in Monticelli's character followed him throughout the whole course of his life; he was improvident and ignorant of money affairs to the last degree, but it was the means of enabling him to follow his beloved art, as, after the episode of his one business venture, he devoted himself entirely to artistic pursuits. A gipsy and wanderer by nature, Monticelli left the parental roof at an early age and went to Paris, where he frequented the galleries, the studios, and private collections, working indefatigably, now from models, again from memory, and sometimes copying the old masters, especially those of the Italian school, which he very much admired. He became acquainted with Diaz, and his canvases of this period show that the younger man was strongly influenced by the works of the master of rich color harmonies. Gradually, however, the strong personality of the artist asserted itself; step by step his work changed, growing in richness, in boldness and brilliancy, following no rules, clinging to no lines prescribed by school or conventional art. With his beloved paintbox for his sole companion, and art his only mistress, this strange man was accustomed to wander wherever his fancy led him, pausing from time to time to place with consummate skill, a pleasing bit of nature upon his ever ready canvas. During all these years Monticelli was seldom understood and rarely appreciated; his works being looked upon by the general public as creations of an eccentric and amusing would-be-artist. Many of his most beautiful canvases were sold in cafés, where he went, from table to table, offering for a mere song paintings whose present value would have seemed a fortune to their original purchasers.

Toward the end of his life his work underwent a complete change. Throwing drawing to the winds, he literally plastered the paint upon his canvas, the result being very much as if it had been used as a receptacle for discarded palette scrapings. Feeling paralysis creeping upon him, Monticelli painted incessantly, furiously, until one day, while seated before his easel, he completely lost all sensation and movement. A few days later, in May, 1886, he died at the age of sixty-two years.

The range of subjects which this versatile man painted is almost without limit. A few portraits show that he was exceptionally strong in the portrayal of the human face, two or three religious pictures would seem to indicate that he was especially gifted in that direction; groups of flowers, of still life, barn-yard scenes and landscapes, all are represented, each with an individual charm peculiar to the subject. It was, however, in wood interiors, with groups of women and children, that Monticelli reached the limit of brilliant coloring. These canvases are like jewels or stained glass windows in their richness and beauty. Unfortunately the peculiar manner in which they are painted renders it almost an impossibility to obtain photographs of the most important works, and to this fact is probably due the world's partial ignorance of a great artist.

In the south of France there two splendid private collections of Monticelli's works; M. Delpiano, of Cannes, is the fortunate possessor of eight canvases, representing every phase of his artist friend's career. Among them is a most exquisite wood interior, whose rich, dark shadows throw into strong relief a group of women and children in the foreground. This especial picture is perhaps the finest example of the period when the painter was most strongly influenced by Diaz. In absolute contrast to this is one of a man plowing, in brilliant sunlight: no matter how dark the day this painting seems to radiate light, and the rich, brown earth suggests an early, moist spring day in the country. The Prince of Wales was desirous of purchasing this picture, saying that with it upon his walls he could have perpetual sunshine, even in the fogs of London; but its owner cannot be induced to part with it.

M. Delpiano has, among other souvenirs of Monticelli, a palette upon which the paint has dried, just as the artist left it. It surely proves that a man's work may be judged by his palette; the bright jewel-like that colors, the exquisite harmonies are here, as in the finished work. It seems almost like a bit of brilliant stained glass or a handful of gems thrown carelessly upon a piece of wood.

In the possession of M. Edmond André, of Marseilles, are a number

of the painter's finest works; one small canvas, which is considered by many connoisseurs as Monticelli's masterpiece, conveys the impression of a beautiful ruby, it is so rich and brilliant; the dense shadows of a wood, dark and yet luminous, show a group of women, children and dogs in the foreground, standing out in delicate, glowing tints. The pendant to this is a strangely opalescent picture, representing a group of people drinking tea under a large tree in the forest.

None of the canvases signed by Monticelli are large: he concentrated his subjects into a small space, and the compositions are marvelous in their grace and grouping, many of them being like scenes from a play with the actors in rich and historical costumes.

It is remarkable that, in spite of their rare beauty and intrinsic value, the exquisite coloring, which has rarely been equalled, and never excelled, there is not in the public collections of Paris one single example of Monticelli's work, while many have recently been purchased by Americans.

BLANCHE DOUGAN COLE.

A metropolitan paper devotes a page to a discussion of the question as to whether the earthquake, which Biblical accounts tell us occurred at the time of the resurrection, was a miracle attendant on only a natural phenomenon happening at that time through mere coincidence. The old masters are dragged bodily into the argument as evidence pro and con, and the question is asked, in all seriousness: "Why did they not paint the earthquake?" The entire discussion reminds one of the sophistry of medieval days, when the monks, who were the only philosophers of the time, wrangled over such questions as: "Is God wiser than He is aware of?" and, "How many angels can light on the point of a needle?"

The masters were not historians, but artists, and having no kinesthetic attachments to their easels, did not attempt to depict quaking and tumbling landscapes. It seems hardly respectful to the masters to use them for the purpose of filling space in an illustrated supplement.



The measures of the pictures enumerated are in centimeters, the height is first given, the prices are in francs.

Collection M. E. Blot.  
Hotel Drouot, May 9 and 10.

Francs.

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Carriere, "Child and Dog" (61x46).....                 | 13,000 |
| Cézanne, "On the River Bank, Autumn" (61x50).....      | 1800   |
| Cézanne, "The House in the Valley" (60x50).....        | 5100   |
| Daumier, "Horseman" (60x85).....                       | 1100   |
| Fantin-Latour, "Nymph" (45x31).....                    | 3150   |
| Guillaumin, "The Island Besse" (93x73).....            | 3900   |
| Jongkind, "Boulevard Montparnasse, Night" (33x24)..... | 2000   |
| Lebourg, "The Castle, Auvergne" (78x48).....           | 2020   |
| Lépine, "Canal in Paris" (28x43).....                  | 3000   |
| Manet, "The Colors" (81x65).....                       | 3500   |
| Monet, "Canal in Amsterdam" (65x55).....               | 5300   |
| Pissarro, "Hills at Vésinet" (65x43).....              | 3100   |
| Renoir, "Breakfast" (61x50).....                       | 4000   |
| Renoir, "In the Garden" (73x60).....                   | 5200   |
| Sisley, "Spring on the Loing" (60x73).....             | 11,600 |
| Sisley, "The Loing at Moret" (34x40).....              | 9050   |
| Degas, "Dancers," pastel (63x47).....                  | 2000   |
| Manet, "Lady with Scarf," pastel (44x34).....          | 1180   |
| Renoir, "Women Dressing," gouache (62x53).....         | 1000   |
| Sisley, "The Beach at Moret," pastel (31x40).....      | 660    |

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Collection of Defer-Dumesnil.  
Hotel Drouot, May 10-12.

In this collection, mostly of modern work, there were also found a number of examples of the older schools, many of which were of signal importance.

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| De Marne, "The Highway" (42x58).....  | 3250   |
| Drolling, "Portrait of Lady" (50x60).....   | 5150   |
| Guerin, "An Agreeable Surprise".....  | 1480   |
| De Heem, "Flowers in a Vase" (80x62).....   | 420    |
| Van Huysum, "Fruits and Flowers" (31x39).....   | 2640   |
| Le Brun, "Self Portrait" (13x11).....   | 1030   |
| Nattier, "Portrait of Mlle. Sylvia, of the Opera" (47x71).....                                    | 2700   |
| Neefs, "Church Interior" (36x53).....   | 400    |
| P. Potter, "Horse in the Meadow" (30x25).....   | 9600   |
| Taunay, "A Fight" (18x22).....  | 1780   |
| Drawings by Albert Dürer, "Portrait of Jacob Muffel, Bourgo-<br>master of Nuremberg" (37x28)..... | 36,000 |